



The Insider, the monthly newsletter of LVA Essex & Passaic Counties, will keep you in the loop on all of the organization's upcoming events.



LVA student Ghassan and his tutor, Jalaire Craver. Ghassan moved to the US with his wife and children after he won a visa through the US Diversity Immigrant Visa Program, which grants 50,000 immigrant visas annually through a lottery. For his written observations, see Page 2.

The Insider

Thanks to you we managed to get through the last fiscal year on our feet and we're enthusiastic about all that the coming year has to offer. You are truly amazing!

We're grateful for all the tutors, students, office volunteers, board members and other friends of literacy who helped make this a year to remember and a community that works hard to reduce, if not eliminate, illiteracy in adults.

The World Cup and literacy

If it seemed like the entire planet was consumed for weeks with the FIFA 2014 World Cup games, there's a simple explanation: It was!

Love it or hate it, it's undeniable that the World Cup is one of the world's premier sporting events that's followed by a billion people. Even here in the US, passion for the game of soccer is up, way up, as witnessed by statistics that show that millions more US viewers tuned-in this year to pre-playoff World Cup games than in the past.

Many of our students and nearly all of our tutors come from countries that competed in this year's games, including the USA, or have ties to nations that competed.

So, even though the games are over, we can still use them to plan lessons that get our students to open up and talk, read and write about the coveted Cup. These links can help:

First, some quick trivia on this year's Cup:

<http://www.worldcupbrazil.net/world-cup-2014/facts/>

From **TeachingIdeas.co**: Outlines, lesson plans, games and more related to the World Cup. Useful for children or adults, some arranged according to reading ability:

<http://www.teachingideas.co.uk/themes/worldcup/index.htm>

World Cup resources: shared by schools and authors

Free downloads of stories and exercises on the games:

http://www.literacytrust.org.uk/resources/practical_resources_info/6037_world_cup_resources_shared_by_schools_and_authors

How to use the World Cup in the classroom

<http://www.edudemic.com/how-to-use-the-world-cup-in-the-classroom/>

Help us stay connected

Please let us know if you change your telephone number, street address or email address, or if you know a student who has done the same. Help us stay connected. Many thanks!

Literacy Volunteers of America Essex & Passaic Counties

90 Broad Street, 2nd Floor, Bloomfield, NJ 07003
(973) 566-6200, ext. 217 or 225

195 Gregory Avenue, 2nd Floor, Passaic, NJ 07055
(973) 470-0039

Cristhian Barcelos -Executive Director
cristhian_barcelos@verizon.net
Russell Ben Ali -Recruitment & Training Coordinator
lvaessex@verizon.net
Monica Celedonio -Student Coordinator
lvapassaic@verizon.net
Jorge Chavez -Data Processing
Debbie Graham -Education Coordinator
lvanewark@verizon.net



LVA student Ghassan uses his cell phone as a dictionary

In the News

To read the stories below, just copy and paste the link into an internet search.

Difficult childhood linked to adult illiteracy

With an adult, the hardness of childhood extends into adulthood as reading and writing turn into another chapter of their survival story where they must hide their non-literate status: *The Guardian*
<http://bit.ly/1ropma3>

The awesome impact of Adult Education

The value and power of adult literacy programs, seen through the eyes of a formerly illiterate, now successful Canadian woman.

<http://www.thetelegram.com/Opinion/Columnists/2014-06-28/article-3779953/STEVE-BARTLETT:-Adult-literacy-programs-have-an-amazing-impact/1>

We need to support adult education classes

New Jersey newspaper columnist is emotionally moved by a high school graduation ceremony for adults
<http://bit.ly/TJC9W1>

Is an American college education worth it?

Author questions the value of a college education after statistics show US college graduates score only eight points higher than Japan high school grads in the literacy portion of a standardized test
<http://bit.ly/1n0QBG>

Observations from a volunteer English teacher in a NJ prison

Volunteer recalls her experience in a prison class, including this warning from a prison official: "If you ain't scared then you probably shouldn't be here right now!"
<http://huff.to/1mbFN67>

Getting to Know Us

**Ghassan, LVA student,
and Jalaire Craver, tutor**

In the following story written by LVA student Ghassan, he recalls his family's experience with the US Diversity Immigrant Visa Program, which foreign nationals enter to win US visas through a lottery. Ghassan said he was anxious to leave his East African country due to a long civil war that had devastating effects on public health and safety, the economy and jobs.

"I come from the Sudan. It is a big country in the northeast of Africa. I was born in a small town which is about 33 miles from Khartoum, the capital of Sudan. My town is located next to the Blue Nile, so most people depend on planting and trading.

"In the 1990s I started thinking about the USA. When I moved to Khartoum to study at the university, I met some students who have relatives in the US. At that time I knew how people come to America, which is by the visa lottery. It is too difficult to find a regular visa to travel to the USA. In November of 2008 my family and I applied for a lottery visa in a small office. When we finished the paperwork I said to my wife 'We are traveling to the US.' I was joking because I knew it was not easy to win the lottery visa to immigrate to the US with 50,000 other people from around the world. We waited about six months for the result of the lottery. I did not go back to the small office to ask for the results because I knew 100% of us were not going to win the visa lottery.

"But a week after the results were posted, my friend called me and said 'You won the lottery!' And I never believed him until I went to that same office and saw my name printed on the paper with the other winners. Immediately, I called my wife and told her about the results.

"A few months after that we started to do more paperwork with the immigration office to get ourselves ready to leave our country. Then they gave us an appointment for the interview with the consul at the Cairo Embassy. It was a long process but everything was ready and done. After that, we started our travel to the US.

"I remember when we arrived at JFK Airport in January 2011. It was snowy and very cold. That was the first time for us to see snow on the ground. My children were shivering. We lived in Newark and later moved to Belleville where we live now.

"I remember the first time when I went outside to meet people and ask them to help me find work. That was very hard for me at the beginning because I had problems speaking and communicating with people. Then I started to think about the language and how I was going to solve this issue. Even though I spoke English a little, it was not enough. So I went to a college to find some English classes and I registered for an ESL class. Also, I decided to take more classes to make my language (skills) even better.

"I went to the Bloomfield Public Library to register for another class. I did all this to improve my language and to find work in the future and, with time, change my life and support my family."

Ghassan eventually found work as a school bus driver. The test for the specialized driver's license, offered only in English and Spanish, would have been impossible to pass without intense study of the English language, said the 38-year-old father of four.

"The hardest thing for me was the language," Ghassan said. "I remember the first two or three months, sometimes I'd make a call and have to give the phone to someone to translate for me."

Ghassan began working with tutor Jalaire Craver last year.

"From our first meeting I could tell that Ghassan was a serious and eager student," said Jalaire. "There may have been an element of luck to his getting a visa to come to the US, but everything after that has been his capacity for hard work and determination to make a place for himself, his wife and four children in this country."

The sad state of illiteracy in America

Did you know that:

- Two thirds of students who cannot read proficiently by the end of 4th grade will end up in jail or on welfare. Over 70% of America's inmates cannot read above the 4th grade level.
- One in four children in the US grow up without learning how to read.
- Literacy is a learned skill. Illiteracy is passed down from parents who can neither read nor write.
- Reports show that low literacy directly costs the healthcare industry over \$70 million every year.

For more statistics, check the following website:

<https://www.dosomething.org/facts/11-facts-about-literacy-america>

Roughly 14 % of adults in the US are functionally illiterate, according to US Department of Education statistics. In New Jersey, 17 % of adults are considered illiterate. Here's a county-by-county breakdown, provided by the government.

- Hudson County, NJ: 37.3%
- **Essex County, NJ: 28.1%**
- **Passaic County, NJ: 25.8%**
- Cumberland County, NJ: 20.7%
- Union County, NJ: 20.6%
- Atlantic County, NJ: 18.3%
- Middlesex County, NJ: 17.1%
- Bergen County, NJ: 15.5%
- Mercer County, NJ: 14.5%
- Camden County, NJ: 12.6%
- Salem County, NJ: 11.9%
- Cape May County, NJ: 10.8%
- Warren County, NJ: 10.2%
- Ocean County, NJ: 10.2%
- Somerset County, NJ: 10.0%
- Morris County, NJ: 9.8%
- Gloucester County, NJ: 9.6%

Help Us Fight Illiteracy

Thanks in large part to you; we were able to aid hundreds of students last year. Please continue your efforts to improve the lives of others by giving the gift of literacy. You can contribute through our website: – <http://www.framework.org/donations/> - or by simply sending a check to our office. All contributions are tax deductible. Thank you for joining us in the fight against illiteracy.



Mary O'Connor, an LVA tutor and NJALL "Teacher of the Year" leads "Getting Started," a workshop for beginning tutors held last month in Bloomfield.

Upcoming Events

Tutor Support Workshops

Please RSVP

"Reading Across the Curriculum" with Maxine McCormick

Maxine, a McGraw-Hill education specialist, will demonstrate how to apply reading techniques to different academic fields, including civics.

Bloomfield Public Library
90 Broad St, Bloomfield, NJ 07003, 2nd fl Boardroom
POSTPONED until Tuesday, Aug. 26, 2014
3:00-4:30 and 6:00-7:30 pm

"Teaching Vocabulary to the English Language Learner," with Nora Devine,

LVA tutor and reading specialist- master's degree candidate

Bloomfield Public Library, 2nd fl Boardroom
Tues. Sep 9, 1:00-2:30 pm

Tutor Training Workshops

Clifton City Hall
900 Clifton Ave, Clifton, NJ 07013
Saturdays, 12-4 pm
September 6, 13, 20, 27, 2014

Bloomfield Public Library
90 Broad Street, Bloomfield, NJ 07003
Tuesdays & Thursdays, 1-4 pm
October 2, 7, 9, 14, 16, 21, 2014